



The Climate Connection

Join the global climate conversation

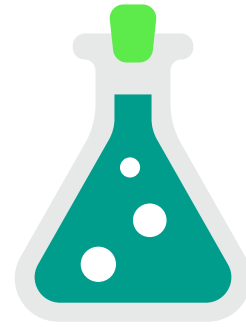
Discover. Share. Act.
www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection
#TheClimateConnection

Green careers guide

Dr Teerapong Yata
Thailand



Dr Teerapong Yata Thailand



A medical scientist who becomes a health-product entrepreneur

It is quite astonishing to learn that the winner of this year's UK Alumni Awards' entrepreneurship category is a medical scientist. Which Thai innovation was chosen for this award? With several pieces of research having been patented, Dr Teerapong Yata has proven deserving of this award. One example of his inventions is a nanotechnology-based platform for immersion vaccination in farmed fish. This has made Thailand's economic fish free from disease, providing enormous benefit to Thai agriculture. Let's learn more about the entrepreneurial scientist in this interview.

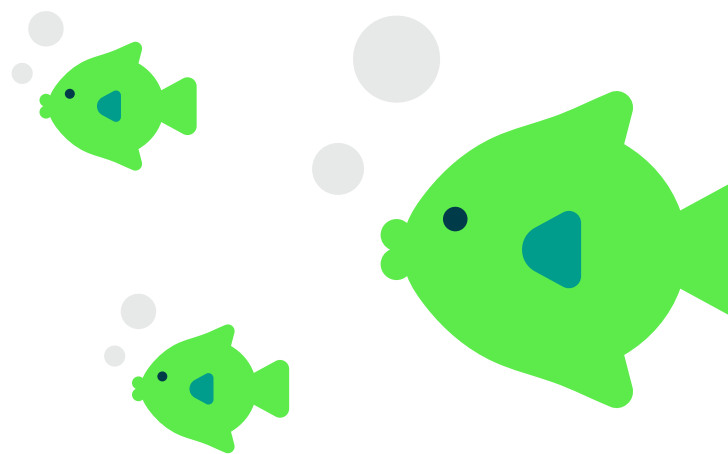
You studied medical science. What did you do after that before becoming a successful entrepreneur?

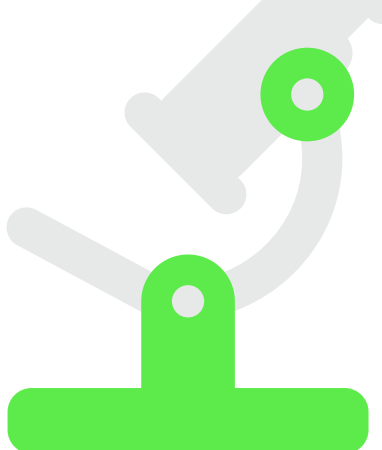
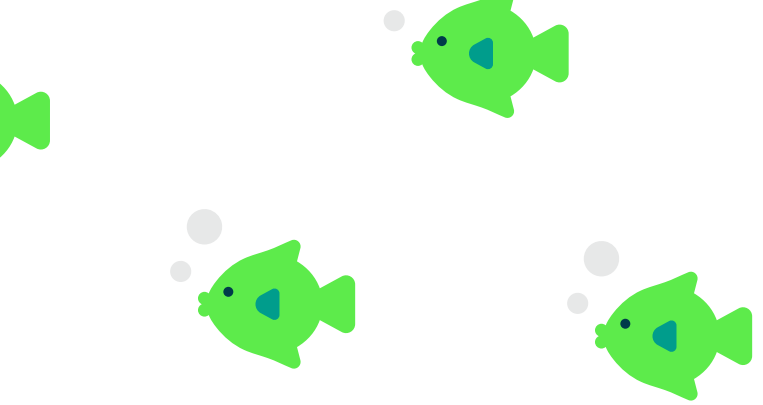
After returning to Thailand, I discovered just how many types of herbs we have in our country. I tried to adapt the research methodologies I learnt and applied some innovative ideas to local products. Everything I am doing now follows this approach. I am currently working with a veterinary team from Chulalongkorn University to produce vaccinations for fish. We found that fish farmers were needing to give vaccinations to each fish individually. This was impossible for farmers who had 10,000+ fish in their farm. During an epidemic, these farmers could do nothing but accept their loss. Our team developed nanotechnology-based immersion vaccination, an innovation that enables a large number of fish to be vaccinated at the same time.



Does this mean you've been able to apply some of the technologies you learnt about in the UK to Thailand?

Yes, my studies in the UK involved project-based learning, where we studied various methods. When I returned to Thailand, I applied these methods to new problems. While I was studying, I used viruses to carry genes into the body to cure a disease. So I tried to adapt this system, using the herbs that we have here in Thailand.





It sounds like the master's and PhD studies there focus on projects and research. When was it that you developed your entrepreneurial skills?

Actually, my studies in the UK involved many things, e.g. intellectual property, engineering, etc. I learnt to see the whole picture, through to selling the products. This is what's helped me to become an entrepreneur. As I was awarded the Thai government scholarship, the government intended to send me to Imperial College London because academics there are very well-known in my field of study.

Apart from academic knowledge, what else did you learn from your time in the UK?

The style of teaching. Even though I was a student, academics saw me as their colleague rather than a student and we worked together. I was very impressed and have adopted this way of thinking with juniors at my workplace. Moreover, I improved my language and survival skills. When I was there, I had to use English all the time. One day I was robbed and had to report the incident at the police station. Everything I faced helped me to develop these skills and made me more confident.



Is it difficult to adapt yourself to the different environment in the UK?

I used the nature of Thai people to make people in my team like me – I always showed respect to others. But as time went by, they told me to be less humble and more straightforward.

Finally, what is your ultimate goal as an entrepreneur?

In the past, I might have just wanted my research to be published. But now I feel proud if my accomplishments can be taken to help society, or even be exported to other countries as a product of the Thai people.

